

Board of Education Meeting
September 3, 2013

Call to Order

Board Vice Chair, Mary Lou Sanborn, called the meeting to order at 5:54 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center. Present: Board members Sue Porcello, Mary Lou Sanborn, Lori D'Ostuni, Scott Schneider, George Beiter and Jeanne Gee; Assistant Superintendent Jim Collin and Superintendent of Schools, Karen Baldwin.

Executive Session

Sanborn moved, D'Ostuni seconded to move into executive session. The motion passed unanimously.

A personnel issue was discussed.

Regular Session

D'Ostuni moved, Sanborn seconded to move into regular session at 6:24 p.m.

Vice Chair Sanborn reconvened regular session at 6:32 p.m. with the same persons present plus Interim Business Manager, Phil Russell, and observers.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

None

Communications

None

Change in Agenda

MOTION #13-50: Porcello moved, D'Ostuni seconded **to table the Executive Session that was to be held at the end of the meeting until the September 17th meeting.** The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Gee moved, Schneider seconded to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2013 Board of Education meeting. The motion passed with one abstention (Zawawi).

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion Action Items

- Status on District Transition to M&J Bus Company
Interim Business Manager, Phil Russell, reported that transportation during the first week of school did not go as well as hoped. Things did improve as the week went on. The biggest problem was getting the students on the buses at the end of the day in a timely manner. This caused buses to run late at all levels. Mr. Russell reported that all issues

have been resolved. Board member Gee asked if all parents who called with concerns had been contacted. The Superintendent reported that they had all been called back. She also stated that M&J has been very responsive with needed route/driver changes. The issues were across grade levels. Board member D'Ostuni reminded everyone that the buses usually run late the first day or so of a new school year. The Superintendent stated that address/bus changes will be able to be done on line for easier parent access. There was brief discussion on traffic issues at the high school and middle school created by the a.m. student drop off. Board member Schneider asked if we had data to see if fewer students are taking the bus and more are getting dropped off this year. Phil Russell stated that bus counts would be in this week.

- Primary Mental Health Grant Application/PALS

The Superintendent provided an overview of how these grant monies are used. Board member Sanborn stated that last year the Board had asked for a parent survey asking feedback and data regarding program success. The Superintendent stated that Jack Ferraro, grant administrator, would be reporting to the Board at a future meeting.

MOTION #13-51: D'Ostuni moved, Zawawi seconded **to approve the Primary Mental Health Grant Application.** The motion passed unanimously.

- Review of 2013/14 Electricity Account

Interim Business Manager, Phil Russell, and Facilities Director, Larry Plano, reported to the Board on electricity usage and strategies to lower a projected shortfall in the budgeted Electricity line item. Four strategies have been determined: lower Peak Capacity Rates, increase "Power Factor", lower Purchase Rate for electricity generation, and lower electricity usage. Board member Beiter expressed his concerns about the promised energy savings from Power Point that have not materialized. The Superintendent stated she met with Power Point representatives in July to discuss the load issues at Suffield High School. She stressed that this was the first look to figure out what else can be done for savings in this area. Board member Gee stated that this issue needs to be transparent and shared with the Town.

- Capital Improvement Plan

The Advisory Committee on Capital Expenditures (ACCE) has requested that each town department provide a 10 year plan which is due this fall. The Board reviewed the Suffield Education Capital Improvement Plan for years 2013/14-2022/23. Phil Russell and Larry Plano answered questions. The Facilities Subcommittee will be meeting in a few weeks to address any feedback from tonight's Board of Education meeting along with an approval at a later board meeting. Board member Gee asked that the final report be posted on the district website. Board member Porcello asked if a tour of the schools could be set up for Board members to better envision the need for items in the 10 year plan.

Board member Zawawi left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

- Acceptance of Gift

MOTION #13-52: Porcello moved, Schneider seconded **to accept a donation to the School Snack Programs K-5 from Mrs. Barbara Powell.** The motion passed unanimously.

Board member Zawawi returned to the meeting at 7:45p.m.

- Adoption of Free and Reduced Priced Meals Policy Statement
MOTION #13-53: D'Ostuni moved, Porcello seconded to approve:

“The Suffield Board of Education has agreed to participate in the National School Lunch Program, and the School Breakfast Programs at Suffield High School and Suffield Middle School and accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced price meals.

The school food authority assures the Connecticut State Department of Education that the school food authority will uniformly implement the following policy to determine children’s eligibility for free and reduced prince meals in all schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the school food authority agrees to all conditions outlined in this “policy” (as attached hereto).” The motion passed unanimously.

Board member Sanborn asked what percentage of students participated in the free and reduced lunch program. The Superintendent should have that information on hand by October 1 and will update the Board. In previous years, it has been around 11%.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent’s Report

- New Teacher Orientation was held on August 21 with board member Gee present.
- Staff Convocation was held on August 22 – Board member Gee addressed the group.
- Professional Development for staff was held on August 23.
- Opening Day for Students was August 27 with 2,435 students attending.
- The district is almost fully staffed. Tech Ed teacher interviews are underway at Suffield High School.
- Scott Dunn, Spaulding Principal, gave a report on the new Full Day Kindergarten Program. He stated that the first week went very smoothly. He cited the preparatory efforts by former Principal, Angie Roman, as a large factor in this transition. The average class size for kindergarten is 19 students, which is on par with other schools in our DRG and neighboring towns. There will be another presentation on Full Day Kindergarten at the December board meeting including feedback from kindergarten parents. Board member Gee asked if Mrs. Roman could be brought to a future meeting to thank for her efforts in setting the foundation for this new program. Mr. Dunn asked if the Board could hold a future meeting at Spaulding to tour the facility.

Chair’s Report

None

Subcommittee Reports

- Budget and Facilities Subcommittees will be meeting soon.
- Policy Subcommittee is schedule to meet tomorrow, September 4, in the morning.

Future Business

- Common Core State Standards – Implementation of Smarter Balanced Assessment
- Large Animal Facility
- Substitute Service Budget Study Beginning August 2013
- School Climate Survey – Sept-Nov. 2013
- National Honor Society – September 2013
- Food Service Update Budget Study beginning August 2013
- Final Site Update – Jan/Feb. 2014
- 10 Year Capital Improvement Plan – October 2013
- Update on FDK – December 2013
- Magnet School/Private School Report

Public Comment

Parent, Natalie Semyanko, thanked Scott Dunn and Phil Russell for their informative reports.

Adjournment

D'Ostuni moved, Porcello seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary

LD/ajk